

Don't Let Data Derail Your EHR Migration

Data abstraction is the backbone of any successful EHR migration. It's the process of locating, evaluating, validating, and transferring your legacy EHR data to your new system so clinicians have access to accurate, complete records upon the next patient appointment.

Done right, data abstraction preserves — and improves — both the patient and clinician experience, and your migration wraps up disruption-free. Done inadequately, it may derail your entire project — risking patient safety, compliance, and more.

From 30+ years helping healthcare organizations move EHR systems, we've determined the three most common data-related challenges that arise during migration. Here's how to avoid them.

Challenge 1: Underestimating the Scope

Data abstraction surfaces complexities that organizations rarely plan for. You may assume all patient data is equal in effort and importance, but in reality, you will encounter inconsistent formats, incomplete records, multiple sources, or legacy systems with hidden quirks.

What to do:

- Conduct a thorough data inventory before migration.
- Build a detailed roadmap that accounts for volume, waves of abstraction, and timing.
- Consider using an experienced abstraction partner to relieve internal teams of certain complexities.

Challenge 2: Misaligning Resources

To save time and money, organizations assign data abstraction tasks across clinical, IT, and operational teams. While there are several aspects of abstraction that are appropriate for internal teams, it's almost a guarantee you'll actually waste time and money if you have no external expertise.

What to do:

- Vet abstraction partners who have medical backgrounds.
- Assign dedicated internal leads.
- Plan to cover absences or spikes in workload.

Challenge 3: Failing to Anticipate Compliance and Security Risks

You must have a plan for protecting sensitive patient data at every stage of the migration. Mistakes in abstraction, transfer, or storage may trigger regulatory violations and put patient safety at risk.

What to do:

- Embed compliance controls for HIPAA and other regulations into your abstraction plan.
- Validate data throughout the migration to ensure its accuracy and completeness.
- Perform audit checks to detect and address vulnerabilities early.

Want to easily jump these hurdles? [Get a free executive advisory session from GuideIT](#) where we offer customized guidance on your environment and transition plan.